

FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

FACULTY RECITAL

Jo-Anne Bentley, mezzo-soprano
Che Anne Loewen, piano

Monday, November 4, 1991

at 8 pm

Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building

PROGRAMME

Jo-Anne Bentley, mezzo-soprano; Che Anne Loewen, piano

If Music be the Food of Love (3rd version)
Man is for the Woman Made

Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

Les Papillons
Le temps des Lilacs
Le Colibri

Ernest Chausson
(1855-1899)

Vier Ernste Gesänge, Op. 121
Denn es gehet dem Menschen
Ich wandte mich und sahe an
O Tod, wie bitter bist du
Wenn ich mit Menschen und mit Engelszungen

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

* * * * INTERMISSION * * * *

Evocations
Four untitled songs

Harry Somers
(b. 1925)

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf
The Diary (April 1919)
Anxiety (October 1920)
Fancy (February 1927)
Hardy's Funeral (January 1928)
Rome (May 1935)
War (June 1940)
Parents (December 1940)
Last Entry (March 1941)

Dominick Argento
(b. 1927)

Irish Country Songs
She moved thro' the fair
The Weaver's Daughter
Must I go bound
I know my love

arr. Herbert Hughes
County Donegal
County Donegal
County Derry
West Irish

PROGRAMME TEXTS AND NOTES

Les Papillons (The Butterflies)

Theophile Gautier

The snow-white butterflies
Float in swarms over the sea;
Lovely white butterflies, when may I
Take to the blue road of the sky?
Do you know, beauty of beauties,
My dancing-girl with eyes of jade,
If they would lend me their wings,
Tell me, do you know where I would go?
Without taking a single kiss to the roses,
Across valleys and woods
Would go to your half-closed lips,
Flower of my soul, and there I would die.

Le Temps des Lilacs (The Time of Lilac)

Maurice Bouchor

The time of lilac and the time of roses
Will not return this spring,
The time of lilac and the time of roses
Has passed, the time of carnations too.

The wind has changed, the skies are sullen,
And we will go no more to roam, and to gather
The lilac in flower and the lovely roses;
The spring is sad and cannot bloom.

O joyous, sweet springtime of the year,
That came, in the past year, to shine upon us,
Your flower of love is so faded,
Alas! that your kiss cannot revive it!

And you, what are you doing? No blossoming
Flowers,
Never any gay sun, nor cool shade;
The time of lilac and the time of roses,
With our love is dead for ever.

Le Colibri (The Hummingbird)

Leconte de Lisle

The green hummingbird, king of the hills,
Seeing the dew and the bright sun
Glitter on his nest, woven of fine grasses,
Like a light breeze escapes into the air,
He hurries and flies to the nearby springs,
Where the reeds make the sound of the sea,
Where the red hibiscus, with its heavenly scent,
Unfolds and brings a humid light to the heart.
Towards the golden flower he descends, alights,
And drinks so much love from the rosy cup
That he dies, not knowing if he could have
Drained it!

On your pure lips, oh my beloved,
My soul likewise would have wanted to die
Of the first kiss, which has perfumed it.

(English translations by Edith Braun)

Vier Ernste Gesänge (Four Serious Songs)

The four texts are all biblical. English translations
of the German follow.

I Ecclesiastes 3: 19-22

It befalleth both men and beasts alike:
As beasts die, so men die too.
To all one breath of life hath been given,
And no more have men than have beasts
For all is vain and empty.
All must go unto one abode:
All are fashioned of dust and earth
And return unto dust
Who know'th if the soul of mortals upward
fareth,

Journeyeth downward?

So I saw that naught was of greater worth
Than that a man should be happy in his labour,
For that is his lot.
For who yet shall bring him thither
That he seeth what shall be when he is gone?

II Ecclesiastes 4: 1-3

I journeyed on my way, thinking of those who
Suffer oppression, and truly there was much
crying made by the sorely troubled,
And no one brought them comfort.
And those who were their oppressors were too
mighty.

Therefore praised I those departed, whom
death had taken from us, more truly
than those alive, who still had breath within
them.

And he that is not is better than both together-
He who knoweth none of the wrong that under
the heavens is done.

III Ecclesiastes 41: 1-2

O Death, how bitter art thou
To a man reminded of thee when he
enjoyeth pleasant moments and liveth
free from sorrow, when he observeth his
fortunes prosper and feasteth at his ease!
O Death, how bitter art thou!

O Death, how kind art thou to those in need,
Who are old and feeble, lost amid a sea
of woes, not expecting, nor hoping that
better days will come?
O Death, how kind art thou!

IV

I Corinthians 13: 1-3, 12-13

Though with the tongues of men and holy angels
I should speak;
and am without love, then am I
become as more sounding brass or
shrill tinkling cymbal.

And though I should prophecy and should
understand
all the mysteries and master all knowledge,
and though I have faith abiding to remove
mountains,
and am without love, then I am as naught.

And though I give all my possessions to the
hungry and let my body be burned, and am
without love, it profiteth me nothing.

Now we behold, as in a glass darkly, a word that
showeth,
but then surely face to face shall we behold it.
Now I know it imperfectly, but then I shall surely
know it, just as I am also known.
Now there abideth faith, hope and love, these
three; but the greatest of these is love.

Evocations

Commissioned by the CBC, this 1966 composition requires some imaginative sound play to "evoke" the moods and images contained in fragmentary texts by the composer.

- I. Loon, loon cry. Night call. Mist. Wreath of night. Darkness, womb of night. Above, infinity of points of light. Water. Stillness. Night sounds. Loon, loon cry. Echoes, haunts, dies, loo...
- II. Shattered light, refracted silver. Shimmers. High, so high, great wings soar on the clear bright joy of day.
- III. And the day spinning away. I cannot capture time's rapture. Spinning spinning, spin...
- IV. Moon cracks and spreads. Winter night. Cold heart of emptiness. In the womb is contained the tomb.

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf

Dedicated to Janet Baker, this song cycle won for Argento the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1975. Its text is comprised of eight excerpts from an intimate diary which the British novelist, Virginia Woolf kept for more than two decades. The cycle begins with her early musings on the purpose of her diary, passes through such disparate topics as an anxiety attack, impressions at poet-novelist Thomas Hardy's funeral, and memories of her parents, to close with the final, desperate entry which precedes her suicide. With remarkable economy of means and sensitivity to text, Argento has created distinctive musical motives for each diary fragment. These he recapitulates in the final song while the text frantically exhorts "observation without introspection" as a protection against impending madness. At the same time as the singer begs herself to "observe perpetually", the piano recalls and summarizes each of the observations which have been related in the first seven songs. In this way, the composer is able to "help" Virginia Woolf achieve, by means of a musical analogue, the goal of her diary which is stated in the first excerpt and reiterated at the end of the cycle.

The Diary

April 1919

What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something ... so elastic that it will embrace anything, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to

it to resemble some deep old desk ... in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life ...

Anxiety

October 1920

Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down; I feel giddy; I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end. But why do I feel this; Now that I say it I don't feel it. The fire burns; we are going to hear the Beggar's Opera. Only it lies all about me; I can't keep my eyes shut ... And with it all how happy I am -if it weren't for my feeling that it's a strip of pavement over an abyss.

Fancy

February 1927

Why not invent a new kind of play; as for instance; Woman thinks ... He does. Organ plays. She writes. They say: She sings. Night speaks. They miss.

Hardy's Funeral

January 1928

Yesterday we went to Hardy's funeral. What did I think of? Of Max Beerbohm's letter ... or a lecture ... about women's writing. At intervals some emotion broke in. But I doubt the capacity of the human animal for being dignified in ceremony. One catches a bishop's frown and twitch; sees his polished shiny nose; suspects the rapt spectacled young priest, gazing at the cross he carries, of being a humbug ... next here is the coffin, an overgrown one; like a stage coffin covered with a white satin cloth; bearers elderly gentlemen rather red and stiff, holding to the corners; pigeons flying outside ... procession to poet's corner; dramatic "In sure and certain hope of immortality" perhaps melodramatic ... Over all this broods for me some uneasy sense of change and mortality and how partings are deaths; and then a sense of my own fame ... and a sense of the futility of it all.

Rome

May 1935

Rome: tea. Tea in a café. Ladies in bright coats and white hats. Music. Look out and see people like movies ... Ices. Old man who haunts the Greco ... Fierce large jowled old ladies ... talking about Monaco. Talleyrand. Some very poor black wispy women.

The effect of dowdiness produced by wispy hair. Sunday café ... Very cold. The Prime Minister's letter offering to recommend me for the Companion of Honour. No.

War

June 1940

This, I thought yesterday, may be my last walk ... the war - our waiting while the knives sharpen for the operation - has taken away the outer wall of security. No echo comes back. I have no surroundings ... Those familiar circumvolutions - those standards - which have for so many years given back an echo and so thickened my identity are all wide and wild as the desert now. I mean, there is no "autumn", no winter. We pour to the edge of a precipice ... and then? I can't conceive that there will be a 27th June 1941.

Parents

December 1940

How beautiful they were, those old people - I mean father and mother - how simple, how clear, how untroubled. I have been dipping into old letters and father's memoirs. He loved her; oh and was so candid and reasonable and transparent ... How serene and gay even, their life reads to me: no mud; no whirlpools. And so human - with the children and the little hum and song of the nursery. But if I read as a contemporary I shall lose my child's vision and so must stop. Nothing turbulent; nothing involved; no introspection.

Last Entry

March 1941

No: I intend no introspection. I mark Henry James' sentence: observe perpetually. Observe the oncome of age. Observe greed. Observe my own despondency. By that means it becomes serviceable. Or so I hope. I insist upon spending this time to the best advantage. I will go down with my colours flying ... Occupation is essential. And now with some pleasure I find that it's seven; and must cook dinner. Haddock and sausage meat. I think it is true that one gains a certain hold on sausage and haddock by writing them down.

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

JO-ANNE BENTLEY is a native of Vancouver, where she received first class honours degrees in English Literature and Music History from the University of British Columbia. A recipient of Canada Council and McConnell Memorial Fellowships, she obtained M.M.A's in Musicology and Voice Performance from McGill University, studying voice with Jan Simons. During her varied professional career she has been a music critic for the *Montreal Star*, a member of The Tudor Singers, a guest artist for many choirs, chamber ensembles and symphonies across Canada and a frequent solo recitalist for CBC radio. She taught voice and song interpretation at McGill University and Vanier College in Montréal for several years prior to joining the voice faculty at the University of Toronto.

CHE ANNE LOEWEN is a member of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto and a well known vocal coach and accompanist. She studied at Wilfrid Laurier University before completing her Masters in Accompaniment at the University of Southern California. She collaborates with prominent Canadian singers and Toronto Symphony members, and her performances can be heard often on CBC.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE FACULTY OF MUSIC

Saturday, November 9, 1991 at 8 pm
CHAMBER SINGERS
Walter Hall - Edward Johnson Building
Tickets \$8/5 Students/Seniors
Box Office 978-3750

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